

I'm against nuclear bombs, but I am not against Nuclear energy.

What I mean by this is that I am not afraid of new technology but I strongly believe it must be heavily regulated, and that society-wide discussions about the appropriate uses is essential to maintaining a healthy civilization. The same is true with AI technology and especially Generative AI. I am writing to you today in the hopes that I will be a voice amongst a chorus that begs you to heavily regulate this new technology, particularly Generative AI.

I work in publishing, and in particular I work in comics with a wide variety of creatives. Even before this current wave of technology, many artists I know personally suffered greatly at the hands of internet thieves -- people who would steal their digital art and use it to make prints, T-shirts, and other products. Most often, by the time the artists find out their work has been stolen the damage would be done, the thief would delete everything, take their profits and run. Then more recently, the ethically disastrous and money-laundering heavy crypto industry entered the scene with "NFTs" and began a whole new wave of digital art theft. Stealing artists work and selling it for thousands of dollars. I promise this isn't off topic but is all connected because some of the same tech-industry folks involved in those endeavors are now turning this new techno-grift into their money-printing machine by stealing copyrighted work and feeding it to their ai blenders without the artists permission.

The first time this technology really started to concern me was when a beloved artist died, and a person threw this technology in the face of those who were grieving. Producing images with generative Ai made solely by feeding his work into the system... the result being butchered and frankensteined versions of the man's own work. It was offensive, upsetting, unethical and scary. It was also when the general art community began to really interrogate how these programs worked and began finding out that their work had been stolen to "train" things like ChatGPT and other programs in mass.

Consent matters, copyright matters, and the millions of people whose jobs in creative industries are being threatened by this unrestrained technology matter. We are talking about highly skilled people who have worked decades to be as talented as they are -- be it as a visual artist, cartoonist, animator, author, or screenwriter. These are people who often work freelance or have no stable income beyond the work they are commissioned for. Who even before this theft-driven technology struggled en-mass to maintain creative careers in an increasingly hostile economy? Now their lives and livelihood are under threat because of some of the richest people on the planet wanting to replace them with machines trained on their work without their permission.

I want to take a moment, before continuing, to acknowledge that EVERYONE will be affected by this technology. Through the use of clever marketing campaigns and aggressive TOS abuses many of these tech companies have convinced thousands to give up their likeness rights. Worse than that, they structured their predatory TOS to hold users liable for the images they submit -- which leaves the consumer almost wholly unprotected if a friend, relative, or even worse a bully/stalker/ or abuser puts their face into these kinds of programs. I fear what this technology can do to individuals without regulations and consequences. For example, without going into the unfortunate details, digital "Revenge porn" is now a thing that exists due to the inappropriate use of generative AI. No, not just the use, but the lack of process and structural rules that allow

anyone to feed whatever they want into these machines without the permission of whoever that might affect or involve, and without any consideration and respect for copyright. Another fear that has risen is the ability to use this technology to rapidly generate misinformation – including fake videos that could be used to alter public opinion and impact elections or even worse. There are already multiple stories of this happening and it is terrifying. As far as diversity and inclusion goes, there are also recent stories about models (especially nonwhite models) being replaced by AI images – often built from their own bodies. Think about that. Think about what THAT must feel like.

There are countless ways imaginable for how this technology can be used to abuse people and damage society. Journalists are currently being fired en masse because media companies believe they can use chat GPT to write for them – despite the ridiculous inaccuracies and other terrifying errors that again – are already leading to an unfortunate climb in disinformation. What a scary impact on the world ChatGPT alone has had in less than a year. Recently I heard of a mental health crisis hotline replacing all of their operators with a robot... people will die from that. It is already happening.

You may think some of the language I used above was harsh, I called the technology theft-based and now I will explain why. The EU has been doing the process you have started, and very recently they discussed a basic ask that would require companies like OpenAI to provide a list of the copyrighted work they are training their systems on. Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI basically threatened to pull their technology out of the EU if they went through with this basic and sensible regulation because he is afraid that the copyright holders will be able to take direct legal action. This is basically an admission that he knows they are breaking copyright and fair-use laws.

(Citing this article here: <https://www.reuters.com/technology/openai-may-leave-eu-if-regulations-bite-ceo-2023-05-24/>)

In light of all of this I am begging you to consider what is best for our entire civilization. Do you want to allow the richest companies on our planet (such as google, Microsoft, Amazon and others just as powerful but less recognizable) to force through technology that will replace millions of workers, including some of societies most talented but economically vulnerable artists? Or will you stand up for us and tell them “no, you must respect the rights of your fellow humans”

Do not allow these companies to self-regulate! They will break those regulations every chance they get and pay whatever fine you ask because their profits will be insane – why? Because what they are doing to all of us – but especially those who create digital content is MINE us. They Mine social media, forums, even private medical records for data. Anything that can feed the machine... and they are and will do it all (if you let them) without paying anyone for anything. Is what we are discussing then not some twisted form of digital slavery? The mass theft of all our thoughts and hard work and in return we are offered nothing more than derivative soulless shadows spat out of a mechanical thresher.

I ask you, have you seen the paintings and drawings of a loved one put through a blender? Have you recognized the subtle brush strokes in how they painted stripped of all its heart and repurposed for some nasty commercial thing that has nothing to do with them? Because I have.

This technology has great potential, surely, in other areas that aren't so personal. Perhaps it could be used to solve global warming, or invent new things yet imagined. But there are some things we do NOT need it for. Such as art, where we already have more than enough hands and brains working on carrying forward the torch of human ingenuity. Need I remind you that our civilization faces an increasingly uncertain energy crisis? How much electricity should we allow these things to waste to make NFT's and "imagine better versions of the Mona Lisa" or zombify our beloved dead such as John Lennon? (as seen in a recent ad for AI)

Regulate this technology appropriately and it may lead to a better world... but if you let it continue on its path, I promise you, we will all be much poorer for it. Already, people I know are discussing staying off the internet in general. Not posting their photos, not posting their art or writing, not sharing anything. That loss of human connection will be a huge setback for our civilization, and for what? Convenience? The ability to have a glorified, overmarketed, supped-up search engine with an auto-photoshop forgery machine built into it replace all the artists, writers, and other brilliant individuals in any number of crafts and professions. Who will benefit the most from it and are they not already some of the richest people/corporations on the planet?

I will not apologize for this lengthy testimony. People like me will not go away. We will continue to fight for what is right. I just hope that we can find allies in what seems to be a battle between a mass of disenfranchised victims and billionaire bullies with all the cash and power they need to hire people like Matt Damon and Seth Myers to "legitimize" their "product" to an unwitting populace too tired and broke to understand they will be victims of this unregulated and unethical technology too.

I hope you do the right thing.

Thank you for your time.